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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In response to the Official Office Action of December 1, 2006, Applicants reply as follows:

In the Official Office Action the Patent Office has indicated that claims 3-5, 9-14, 20 and 21 would be allowable if re-written in independent form including limitations of any intervening claims. Accordingly, claim 3 has been placed in independent form. It is thus respectfully submitted that claim 3 and dependent claims 4, 5, 20, 21, 23, 24, and 27 are allowable.

Claims 1 and 2 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ali, U.S. Patent 4,983,661. Ali has been argued by the Patent Office as teaching a thermoplastic resin, a metal salt in the amount of from about 5% to about 20% by weight, and a thermoplastic resin in an amount of from about 20% to about 80% by weight of the composition. Applicants have amended claim 1 by inserting "consisting essentially of" language so that the claim is now limited to the specific components recited and any other components that do not materially change the properties thereof. Accordingly, claim 1 relates to a polymer having only a small amount, 5% by weight or less, of an anhydrous scavenger and a very small amount up to 1% by weight, of an optional inert adjuvant. Since the Ali reference contains only up to 80% by weight of a polymer, Column 6, line 57 through Column 7, line 13, it cannot teach or suggest Applicants' composition that contains at least 94% by weight of a polymer upon this basis alone it is deemed that independent claim 1 is allowable.

Applicants' invention relates to the utilization of an alkali metal silicate and zinc oxide which produces unexpected improvements with regard to reducing tarnishing of various metals such as silver. As set forth on page 15, wherein higher numbers mean higher amounts of tarnishing, the use of 0.75% of sodium disilicate resulted in a tarnish value of 2.5 whereas the use of 0.75% by weight of zinc oxide resulted in a tarnish value of 1. It would thus be expected that when the two were utilized in the same amounts, a tarnish value of

1.75 would be obtained. However, when sodium disilicate was utilized in combination with zinc oxide, each at an amount of 0.50% by weight, a total amount of 1%, a tarnish value of 2 was obtained. Inasmuch as higher amounts of anti-tarnishing compounds such as sodium disilicate and zinc oxide would result in lower tarnishing values, if the amount of the combination of sodium disilicate and zinc oxide was a total of 1.5% by weight, the tarnish value would be two-thirds of 2, or a value of 1.33. This value is lower than the expected 1.75 value thus indicating that synergistic results were achieved and that Applicants' claimed invention is thus patentable.

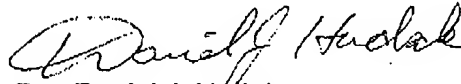
It is further noted that Applicants' scavenger is an alkali metal silicate such as sodium silicate, potassium silicate, etc. No such metal salts are taught or suggested by the Ali reference. Rather, Column 6, lines 20-43 state that the metal salts are not alkali salts but rather alkaline earth salts such as sulfates, carbonates, or oxides. Hence Applicants' claimed silicate anion is also not taught or suggested.

It is respectfully submitted that the Ali reference is non-analogous art. Applicants' amended claim 1 relates to an anti-tarnishing composition that contains very high amounts of at least 94% by weight of a polymer and very low amounts, that is 5% by weight or less of an alkali metal silicate and zinc oxide. In contrast, the Ali reference relates to a molding composition that prevents plateout of the pigment on the surface of a mold. Relatively low amounts of a polymer, that is 80% by weight or less, and high amounts of a pigment, that is from 15% to 45% by weight are utilized. A fortiori, the Ali reference contains no teaching or suggestion of Applicants' alkali metal silicate. It is thus respectfully submitted that a person of ordinary skill in the art, seeking to solve the problem of preventing passage of a sulfur containing gas through a polymer would not reasonably be expected or motivated to look at the molding compositions of Ali that contain high pigment content and prevent plateout of the pigment on a mold surface. It is thus respectfully submitted that the Ali reference relates to non-analogous prior art and hence is not applicable.

In view of the above amendments and arguments, a formal notice of allowance of claims 1-5, 10-14, and 20-27 is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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